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April 15, 2003 LB 435, 454

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Aguilar. You've heard the closing on LB 454. The question before the body is, shall it advance to E & R Initial? All in favor of the motion vote aye, opposed nay. We're voting on the advancement of LB 454. Have you all voted who care to? Record please, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 34 ayes, 1 nay, Mr. President, on the advancement of LB 454.

SENATOR CUDABACK: The motion to advance was successful. Mr. Clerk, next agenda item.

CLERK: LB 435 is a bill by Senator Beutler. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 16 of this year, referred to the Business and Labor Committee. The bill was advanced to General File, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Beutler, you're recognized to open on advancement of LB 435.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, I thought a long time about how to start this discussion this morning. And actually, I ended up thinking that maybe the best way to start it was to take an excerpt from Senator McDonald's prayer this morning, to the effect that to diminish the dignity of others is to diminish our own dignity. And I honestly believe that what we're allowing to happen with regard to minimum wage laws is a thing that seriously affects the dignity of all workers at the lower end of the pay scale; that the minimum wage has been eroding away, as I will hopefully demonstrate to you, the effect of which is that thousands of families continue to sink below poverty level, one consequence of which is that we tolerate and actually establish big government in part to subsidize the wages of business. What I really think should happen is that the economic system should be constructed so that those at the bottom end of the system are not denied the right to make a living, sustainable wage for their family, and that that ought to be the first rule, and that we construct our economic models with that as the basis for the construction. The basic idea of LB 435 is to raise the Nebraska minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$5.80 an hour on October 1,